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THE TRUE ORNAMENTS OF FEMALE CHARACTER.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT WEST BOSCAWEN, N. H.,

Tuesday, September 13, 1842,

AT THE

FUNERAL

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH BUXTON,

WIFE OF

REV. EDWARD BUXTON,
Pastor of the Congregational Church in that place.

BY

REV. NATHANIEL BOUTON,
PASTOR OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, CONCORD.

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February, 1843.

Rev. NATHANIEL BOUTON,
Concord.

SIR:

The undersigned, being appointed by the Second Congregational Church in Boscawen, to express their sense of obligation to the Rev. Mr. Bouton, for his very appropriate discourse, delivered 13th September last, at the interment of their eminently pious and exemplary friend, Mrs. Elizabeth Buxton, and to request a copy for the press, do therefore, Rev. Sir, respectfully solicit your compliance with the request of the Church.

Ebenezer Price,
Benj. E. Sawyer,
S. B. Little,
Committee of the Church.

Boscawen, January, 1843.

DISCOURSE.

I. PETER, 3: 3, 4.

WHOSE ADORNING—LET IT BE THE ORNAMENT OF A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT, WHICH IS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD OF GREAT PRICE.

Mournful the occasion which has called us together! A bereaved husband, motherless babes, affectionate brothers and sisters, a sympathizing church and people have, by this Providence, experienced an irreparable loss! But we mourn not as those who have no hope. Our loss is her eternal gain. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth:—yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Together let us bow submissively before the throne of God, and say, "Thy will be done." "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

On an occasion like this, it might be expected that I should choose a theme of discourse adapted to give consolation to mourners—such as the nature and certainty of the happiness of believers; the benevolent design of God in afflictive Providences; the various sources of christian comfort; or, at least, the duty and importance of preparation for death. These, and such like themes, would indeed be highly appropriate: but with such an example before us as the beloved woman exhibited whose death we deplore, I trust I shall be excused if I dwell on topics less familiar, and improve the occasion in attempting to show what are the TRUE ORNAMENTS OF FEMALE CHARACTER. In other words: what, according to the scrip-

tures, are those virtues of woman which 'in the sight of God are of great price.'

In the text and context, there is a brief statement both of what is and what is not ornamental of female character. Without, however, dwelling at length upon what is negative, I would say that the scriptures bestow no special commendation upon any quality or ornament that is merely *external.*

Although, for example, PERSONAL BEAUTY is a quality which gives a charm to its possessor, and is by most men held in high estimation; yet, as it has no essential connexion with the virtues of the heart, so the scriptures rarely—I may say never—bestow encomiums on it. Rather, it is alluded to as a source of temptation, and a ground of vexation and trouble. Sarah, who was 'very fair to look upon,' became, on that account, a snare to Abraham, and herself connived at his deception and falsehood. Rebecca, who was also of 'good countenance,' was a source of similar temptation to Isaac. The beauty of Bathsheba ensnared David; and that of Vashti, the queen of Ahasuerus, subjected her to the rude demand of exposure to the gaze of the princes and the people; and her refusing it, was the cause of the king's anger and of her lasting exclusion from his presence. Hence, though beauty is generally esteemed a priceless ornament, yet it is not so in the sight of God. "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain—but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

Neither do the scriptures commend ornaments of DRESS in woman. "Whose adorning—let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible." So the apostle Paul: "I will, therefore, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." I. Tim. 2: 9, 10. The prophet Isaiah describes the pride

and haughtiness displayed by the daughters of Zion in their manners and ornaments, and denounces the judgments of God upon them. Isaiah 3 : 16—24. With such declarations of scripture in view, of what esteem are external ornaments in the sight of God ? Simplicity, neatness, and comfort in dress, are approved by all ; but whatever is added to gratify pride and vanity ; to make false impressions on beholders, and to excite admiration, is unbecoming the christian profession. How light and vain do such outward adornings appear in the chamber of sickness and of sorrow ! How inconsistent with the devotions of the closet,—the altar of prayer,—the communion table of the Lord ! How shocking the association of them with the coffin and the sepulchre ! Go, look on the frail and perishable body which was wont to be decked with gay attire, now shrouded for the grave ! What, in the estimate either of God or of man, is the value of those ornaments with which that lifeless and corruptible form was once decorated !

Far be it from me to undervalue dress as a means of health and comfort. So far as used for these purposes, it denotes in part the character of a virtuous woman. I would allow and require of christian women the gratification of good taste, and a regard to the proprieties of social life, according to their relative means and station in society ; but christianity, the essential element of which is humility, stands opposed to all display betokening vanity and pride, and commands her female votaries to deck themselves, not with external ornaments, but 'with good works,' and 'to put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.'

This leads me to observe, that the scriptures place all true excellence of character *in the dispositions of the heart*, and in those works which naturally proceed from them. Hence they commend only what is inherently lovely, or productive of good to others. But on this subject the scriptures teach more by example and precept than by language of encomium. When, however, they do speak in praise of women, the vir-

tues of the heart are regarded as paramount to all other qualities. "*The king's daughter is all glorious within;*" and this is her chief excellence, although "her clothing is of wrought gold." When David prays 'that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace,' he has respect to those qualities which fit them to be useful, and to adorn the station in society in which they are placed, 'even as corner-stones both beautify and connect together the parts of a magnificent structure.'

But to be particular:

First: I observe, One ornament of woman consists *in devotion to domestic duties;* or, *industry and skill in household affairs.* In that beautiful character drawn by Solomon of a virtuous woman, this is mentioned as a prime virtue: "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household and a portion to her maidens. She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh diligently with her hands. She layeth her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." Proverbs, 31. Although the manner in which female industry and skill are exhibited is different now from that of ancient times, yet no changes can affect the virtues themselves. Never does woman appear more in her place—never more adorn her station, than when cheerfully devoting herself to domestic duties; guiding her affairs with discretion; saluting with her eyes the early dawn of morning, and plying her industrious hand to such labors as conduce to family support and comfort, till the shades of evening summon her to repose. Nor does Solomon alone commend this virtue in woman. In the various directions which the apostle Paul gives to christian women, it is manifest that he regards *home* as their sphere, and the domestic affections and duties as their ornaments.—"Teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good

—that the word of God be not blasphemed." A temper and practice contrary to these inspired directions not only tarnish the character of women professing godliness, but bring reproach on religion itself.

2. Another ornament of woman, *is kindness and hospitality*, or *gently ministering to the wants of others.* This trait is also conspicuous in Solomon's portrait of a virtuous woman: "She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy;" and "on her tongue is the law of kindness." How beautiful is this feature in the character of Rebecca, as shown in her conduct towards the servant of Abraham; also in that of Abigail in her treatment of David, and in that of the Shunamite to Elisha the prophet: Much more in that of Mary, Joanna, Susanna, and many other women who ministered unto Jesus of their substance. The eulogy of Dorcas—a woman full of good works and alms deeds which she did—was the tears of widows, as they showed the coats and garments which she made while she was with them. In the salutations of Paul, honorable mention is made of Phebe, "a succorer of many;" of Mary, "who bestowed much labor" on the disciples; of Tryphena and Tryphosa, and the beloved Persis, 'who labored much in the Lord.' Rom. 16: 1, 6, 12. To entitle a christian widow in advanced life to the charity of the church, the apostle requires that she be 'well reported of for good works;—if she have brought up children; if she have lodged strangers; if she have washed the saints' feet; if she have relieved the afflicted; if she have diligently followed every work.' 1. Tim. 5: 10. How precious is the encomium pronounced by our Saviour upon the poor widow that cast her two mites into the treasury; and also upon the woman that came with an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head as he sat at meat. Luke 21: 1—4. Matt. 26: 6—13.

Here, then, is woman's adorning! Endowed by the Creator with more affection, sympathy, and tenderness than man, she

is especially fitted for the gentle offices of charity and kindness. Thus to minister to the wants of the needy; to soothe the sorrows, alleviate the distresses, wipe away the tears, and promote the happiness of her fellow-creatures, is an ornament more beautiful than a chain of gold around her neck, or jewels, "broidered hair," or splendid apparel, to decorate her person.

3. Another virtue especially commended in women, is *respectful* and *affectionate subordination to their husbands.* To ensure order, harmony, efficiency and happiness in any society, it is necessary to have an acknowledged head, in whom authority shall be vested and confidence reposed. In the family, God has vested this authority in the man—who, however, is authorized to rule only in love. On the other hand, the scriptures enjoin not only love to their husbands, but *subjection* and *reverence*, as the religious duty of wives. "As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be subject to their own husbands in every thing." On this principle of subordination, it is forbidden to woman to teach in public, or to assume any position that implies authority over the man. Such assumption is inconsistent with that gentleness and delicacy which are so highly ornamental of female character, and incongruous with the design of the Creator in constituting the woman an "help-meet" for man. Let none, therefore, suppose it derogatory to woman to hold a subordinate place, and to reverence her husband as the head of his house: rather, it is her ornament to do it; and in no earthly relation can the peculiar virtues of woman shine brighter or more to the adorning of religion. For this, she has at least one illustrious example recorded in scripture: "After this manner the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."

4. But the brightest ornament of woman, *is sincere and*

humble piety—or, as expressed in the text, "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." The circumstances in which most women are placed; the daily occurrences in the family; the perplexity attending domestic engagements; the solicitude felt for children, and all the pressure of maternal responsibilities, are calculated, above most things, to ruffle the temper, to produce discontent and disquietude; in short, to awaken passions inconsistent with christian meekness. Hence the value of religion, which tends to calm the agitated passions, and produce a gentle, quiet, and meek temper, under the constantly recurring troubles of life! This is 'the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible.' It is woman's brightest jewel and crown.

To enlarge, however, on this point: Though in both men and women the elements of piety are the same, yet their developments are modified by constitutional temperaments, and partake of the peculiarities of character which distinguish the sexes. The piety of woman is unquestionably more tender, affectionate and ardent, than that of man. Her faith is more simple and confiding; her penitence more tearful and contrite; her love more affectionate and glowing; her hopes, perhaps less stable, but more consolatory; and her joys, if not more pure, at least more sweet and rapturous. These characteristics of female piety are amply illustrated by scripture examples. It was a woman who penitently bathed the feet of her Saviour with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head; who, moreover, kissed his feet and anointed them with ointment; a woman, who in the simplicity of faith said, If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole; a woman, to whom Jesus said, Great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt; a woman, who in the ecstacy of joy exclaimed, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord; my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' When all the disciples of Jesus had forsaken him and fled, then daughters of Jerusalem followed, bewailing and

lamenting him, as he went on the dolorous way bearing his cross to Calvary. It was woman's love, stronger than death, which clung last to the cross; which followed his body to the sepulchre, to see how it was laid; which prepared spices and ointments to embalm him; woman earliest visited the sepulchre on the morning of the first day of the week, and had the first sight of the risen Saviour, though she saw him with eyes dimmed with weeping; and woman's voice first gladly announced his resurrection.

On the peculiarities of female piety it were delightful to expatiate. In addition to examples already adduced, let me briefly refer to Hannah, who 'prayed in her heart,' and afterwards gave joyful thanks for God's donation, saying, "For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him; therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord;" to Ruth, who with unyielding resoluteness said to Naomi, 'Thy people shall be my people, and thy God 'my God;' to Anna, who in old age 'departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers, night and day;' to Mary, who sat at the feet of Jesus, and heard his word, and of whom Jesus said, "She hath chosen the good part which shall never be taken away from her." Women composed a part of the first meeting for prayer that was held in Jerusalem, after the ascension of the Saviour. At the house of Mary, the mother of John, many were gathered together praying, when an angel released Peter from prison. The 'unfeigned faith' which distinguished Timothy dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and in his mother Eunice, and by them from a child he was taught the holy scriptures. In the roll of ancient believers, of whom the world was not worthy, the apostle mentions 'women who through faith received their dead raised to life again.'

Such are some of the examples of female piety recorded in scripture, and such the characteristics which, in every age, are the ornament and glory of women. These, when

combined with a sound understanding, cultivated intellect, refined manners and taste, all harmoniously blended, constitute the perfection of female character. These are incorruptible ornaments—a beautiful robe, adorning the soul; inwrought not with gold, but with the graces of humility, meekness, faith, love, charity. How well they befit an incorruptible spirit! To borrow the language of Leighton: "Your varieties of jewels and rich apparel are perishing things. You shall one day see a heap made of all, and that all on a flame;—and in reference to yourselves they perish sooner. When death strips you of your nearest garment,—your flesh—all the others, however fine and nicely wrought, must be put off, too. But these spiritual ornaments remain, and are incorruptible. They neither wear out, nor go out of fashion: but are still the better for the wearing, and shall last to eternity, and shine there in full lustre."

The subject which I have endeavored to exhibit, in a scriptural aspect, may be still further illustrated by its application to the beloved woman whose decease has filled our hearts with sorrow. Some of the qualities which "in the sight of God are of great price," were her adorning. While we deplore her death in the prime of womanhood, we may rejoice that she was spared long enough to show what choice virtues had bloomed and were ripening in her character, and how the grace of God was magnified both in her life and death.

It will not be deemed unsuitable to remark, that the peculiar excellencies of Mrs. Buxton were not apparent on a superficial view. Though of agreeable person and manners, she laid no claim to beauty, in the ordinary sense of the term; nor did she ever seek by 'outward adorning' to win admiration. In her usual dress there was a simplicity, even plainness, which indicated a humble mind; and which, conformed as it was to scriptural precept, administered a silent reproof to the daughters of gayety and fashion. In the opinion of some, the unadorned simplicity of her apparel might

be attributed to negligence, or want of good taste ; but knowing, as we do, it was the result of principle and dislike of all ostentation, it bespeaks a heavenly mind, and deserves commendation rather than censure. What now to her would be "broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array!" What are all such decorations, in comparison with the robe of righteousness which, we believe, adorned her soul; and in which we trust she is now arrayed in the presence of her Saviour, and among the saints in glory everlasting !

Much of Mrs. Buxton's excellence of character is to be ascribed to the spirit, the precepts and example of her sainted mother. She was an obedient child, and as she advanced to womanhood exhibited in her manners, her habits and her spirit, the plastic hand that had gently moulded her.*

Endowed by nature with a mind of superior order, she placed a just estimate upon *intellectual improvement.* She felt it to be a duty, by diligent study, to qualify herself for usefulness in whatever station Providence might assign her. Her diligence and application in early youth always ensured the approbation of her teachers, and made her a pattern for others. Though extremely diffident of her own powers, and through an almost excess of modesty, fearful that she might fail on occasions of public examination, yet it was remarked by one who well knew her, and who often witnessed the trial of her capacities, that he never heard her recite incorrectly when under examination at school. With a mind well disciplined, and stored with knowledge ;—a memory unusually correct and retentive ;—a readiness and distinctness in communication, she was admirably qualified as an instructor of youth. To this business she devoted herself, at intervals, for several years. She excelled most females of good education, in her style of composition, and in instructive conversation. Far from being talkative, "she opened her mouth with wisdom." In the midst of household affairs, and the duties which devolved on her as the

* Mrs. Buxton was the second daughter of the late Mrs. Elizabeth McFarland, of Concord. See Appendix.

wife of a minister, her love of study was unabated. In that retired closet, which at her special desire was fitted up for the purpose, she redeemed time by early rising, and perhaps unseasonable hours of retiring, for reflection, reading and writing.*

Her devotion to domestic duties was a realization of Solomon's description of a virtuous woman. Assiduous in attention to all her engagements, she was a pattern of industry, frugality and economy *at home;* carefully gathering up the fragments, that nothing might be lost, but that she might have the more to give to objects of charity.

Though as a wife and mother her experience was comparatively short, yet she well understood her duties, and discharged them with a conscientiousness, perseverance and ability, that gave promise of eminent usefulness. Her children were the Lord's—to him devoted as soon as they drew the breath of life,—to him gladly given in solemn covenant, and trained to know and serve him, as fast as their unfolding capacities admitted. These babes may forget their mother; but they will never lose the impress of her prayers and her spirit.

The spirit of piety—which was her brightest ornament—sweetly pervaded and controlled all her conduct. This gave a charm to her character in the several relations above referred to. I speak now more particularly of her views of divine truth; her religious affections, hopes, and consolations. She made a public profession of religion in the First Congregational Church, in Concord, on the first Sabbath in January, 1827, then 19 years of age. But years before, even from early childhood, under the tender instructions and prayers of her mother, she was the subject of religious impressions,—and, as she once expressed herself, "so intense were our mother's desires for our salvation, that I often wished I was a christian, if it were merely to make her happy." As her pastor, I recollect distinctly that when her attention

* See a beautiful reference to her closet, in the Appendix.

was first especially awakened to the care of her soul, she had very clear views of the law of God, her guilt, and the justice of God in her condemnation. She felt her exceeding unworthiness of God's favor; and, when enabled to hope in his pardoning mercy, she exhibited much humility, and sweet reliance on the merits and atonement of Christ. As she advanced in knowledge and experience, these elements of her piety were more and more developed and matured. If I misjudge not, self-distrust, humility, a clear sense of the evil of sin, self-denial, a calm but firm reliance on the blood of Christ, to atone; on his merits to justify; his word to enlighten and guide, his Spirit to renew and sanctify, were the distinguishing features of her religion. These led her to watchfulness and prayer, and to the diligent study of the scriptures. She loved the house, the worship, the ordinances of the Lord. She delighted in the holy Sabbath—in the company of Christ's ministers—in communion with saints, and in all those works and enterprises of christian beneficence which are designed for the moral renovation of the world.*

Her views, however, may in several respects be better understood, by referring to her own expressions at sundry times, during the slow progress of her fatal disease. "How precious," said she, "are the comforts which God reserves for those who are brought into the state in which I am. O, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!"—"For some time previous to my sickness," she added, "I cried unto God, without seeming to receive any peace or enlargement; but now I see for what he was preparing me." At another time she said she had delightful discoveries of her interest in Christ—but desired prayer, 'that she might have grace to crucify her sins, and hate them more and more.' As indicative of her love for those portions of scripture which most clearly teach the doctrines of grace, she requested her husband to read to her

* These traits are well illustrated by extracts from Journal, in the Appendix.

the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, the tenth and eleventh verses;—on which she said, "That is good." Though occasionally exercised with doubts and fears, yet, for the most part, she enjoyed sweet peace and consolation. "I do not know," she said, "but it may be presumption, but I am driving away all doubts." Again; "I do not know that I have any more evidence of my good estate than formerly; but I am sensible of a more actively taking hold of the promises of God." At another time she observed, "When death stares me in the face, I am sometimes afraid; I have not such views as many have had: But when I come to the cross of Christ, I find a firm foundation." To those who were lamenting the loss that would be experienced by her death, she said, "God is able to make up all losses." Being asked respecting her views of heaven, she said, "It seems desirable to go where the law is kept *perfectly*, and I can keep it, too;" and again: "If I am a child of God, he has something for me to do in heaven. I know not how it is before the resurrection; but after that, we read, 'they serve God day and night in his temple.'" To her youngest sister and a friend who were kindly ministering to her, when exceedingly feeble, she looked up with a sweet smile, and said, "*Do you know you are helping the angels?* They are all ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation."

The night previous to her death she said: "I have the presence of the Saviour." Again: "God seems to be making new discoveries of his love to me. He seems to be bidding me welcome!" She had a very comforting view of the passage, Zeph. 3: 17: "*The Lord thy God in the midst of thee, is mighty: he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing.*"

I will, however, add no more as illustrative of her christian character. She sweetly sleeps in Jesus.

"'Tis finished! the conflict is past,
The heaven-born spirit is fled;
Her wish is accomplished at last,

And now she's entombed with the dead.
The months of affliction are o'er;
The days and the nights of distress;
We see her in anguish no more—
She has found a happy release.
Then let us forbear to complain
That she has now gone from our sight;
We soon shall behold her again,
With new and redoubled delight."

"I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Rev. 14: 13.

Permit me, in conclusion, to say, You, my dear brother, whom God has bereaved of the wife of your bosom, must derive no small consolation from your recollections of her christian life and of her peaceful and triumphant death:—still more from the confidence which you repose in the wisdom and goodness of God in all his dispensations. Be assured, too, of the tender sympathy and condolence of all your brethren in the ministry. Several of us have passed through similar scenes of domestic affliction, and thus have been taught to 'weep with them that weep.' Though, dear brother, the charge of your now motherless babes; the anxieties which must press on your heart, as a father and as a pastor, will all tend to depress your spirits and diminish your effective labors; yet, consider that the promise of your Saviour is sure: "Lo! I am with you always." God, your covenant God, is disciplining you, to prepare you, we trust, for greater usefulness. He gives you this lesson of domestic bereavement, to qualify you the better for a sympathizing pastor and friend among the afflicted families of your charge. We entreat, yea, we charge you, not to sink in despondency; nor essentially to relax your labors in the gospel; but, by much prayer, and study of the scriptures, and application by faith of the promises to your own desolated heart, seek to be furnished more abundantly for your work, and may 'the grace of Christ be sufficient for you, and his strength be made perfect in your weakness.'

Tender and affecting are the recollections which this Providence must awaken in the minds of the brothers and sisters. No doubt, my friends, you have already thought of your departed mother's prayers, and faith in her covenant God;—of the *assurance* even—which she often expressed, when drawing near to death, that *all* her children would be brought into the kingdom of Christ, and that she would meet them in heaven. Shall I not record it to the praise of God's covenant faithfulness, that as you hope, her prayers have, in the first regard, already been answered; and that your sister, bearing your mother's name and virtues, has *gone* to the happy meeting in heaven; an earnest and pledge that in due time you will join them there. As the now professed disciples of Christ, Oh let the remembrance of God's covenant mercy, of which you are witnesses and monuments, stimulate you to fidelity. "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Heb. 6: 11, 12.

Finally, we tender our sympathy to this bereaved church and people. When Divine Providence assigned the beloved woman, whose death you deplore, her location among you, it was, we know, a subject of general congratulation. You confided in her before even you had experience of her worth. But certain I am that I express the sentiments of you all, when I say, your first estimate of her was not too high. Every year of her residence among you she has been rising in your esteem. You loved her for her native modesty and humility. You were pleased with her domestic qualities; you admired her for good sense and correct information on various subjects. She was a welcome visitant in your families—a pattern in many respects for your wives and daughters; and, most of all, you loved her for the christian graces which adorned her character. While all of you mourn her loss, her early death is especially a bereavement to the

sisters of this church. You will see her face and hear her voice no more—either in the maternal band or in the room for prayer, or in your social circles, or in the charitable association. But may you, through grace, copy her example and cherish her virtues,—like her adorn your christian profession in life, and like her triumph in the hour of death! AMEN.

APPENDIX.

Mrs. BUXTON, like her godly mother, kept a journal of her religious exercises, some extracts from which will more fully illustrate her character, and must be read with interest by all who knew her.

Feb. 9, 1839. Thou eternal God! I desire to lift up my heart to thee in thankfulness for thy grace bestowed upon me, last evening and to-day. I do believe I have experienced that thou hast heard the petitions I offered a few weeks since, and that now I have received the faith I sought for. I never before could so confidently hope in God, and expect his presence. It seems as if I could wait for thy salvation, even when hope is almost gone. Let me feel my constant dependence upon thy Spirit, for grace to preserve me from unbelief. Lord, increase my faith, and give me to see its fruit.

March 24. How shall I find security against these wanderings! I engage in worldly concerns, and become so absorbed in them as to unfit myself for secret prayer, for the devotions in the family, and for that conversation which is calculated to promote spiritual improvement. Last evening, I had some desires that I might be assisted to keep the day in the fear of the Lord. I desire to give myself anew to him. Shall I be contented to live on, (if life is spared,) thus far from God?—doing no more to promote his glory in the world? But if I would bring forth the fruit of holiness, I must not shrink from the labor and self-denial which are necessary. I must take up every cross, and deny myself such gratifications as I know or suspect to be injurious to the soul. Oh! God, may I be led this week in the right and safe path. May I be assisted every day, and every hour, to obey thee:—awaking every morning with thee, and continuing and ending the day with thee. Thou knowest the temptations to which I shall be exposed, and the circumstances in which I am to be placed. Help me to *glorify thee.*

Nov. 24. Through the goodness of my heavenly Father I am now favored with a place of retirement—which is, in every respect, convenient and comfortable. No place could have been planned more quiet and secure, or better calculated for devotional purposes. I receive this mercy with peculiar delight, because it seems to come from the giver of all good gifts, and that a token of good to my soul. I have at *some times* been unable to have such a spot; and now I have one devoted exclusively to this object. Oh! my Father, I thank thee, that thou didst put it into the heart of my husband thus to seek my comfort, and the good of my soul. I consecrate this closet to thy worship. Here

may I hold communion with thee, day by day. Let thy Spirit but come and dwell here, and this will be a bethel. Oh, may he lead me into all truth.

Dec. 15. Though deprived of the privileges of the sanctuary this day, I desire to bless the Lord that I have had some sweetness in meditating upon the favor with which he remembers those who worship thee; likewise for the freedom I have had in prayer, and the comfortable evidence I have had of his merciful designs towards me and my family. I think I can give up my all into his hands. His mercy is indeed great, and I desire to know and prize it more. I have been privileged of late by reading "Edwards on the Affections," and think I find some evidence that through divine grace my affections are in some degree such as the word of God requires. Oh, for grace to walk with God during the present week! to be watchful and prayerful, cheerful and humble. To God I commend myself, and all my ways.

24. This afternoon and evening, I have had some desires after holiness. I can see how precious a grace humility is; and I believe I feel some relish of it in my own soul. My prayer this morning was, that my daily meditations might leave an abiding impression on my heart. I found that "slightness of spirit" has been the means of obliterating good impressions; and now, that the work of meditation has (by means of Ambrose's directions) become comparatively easy, I am afraid I shall not retain that benefit which the prayerful believer has. Through the goodness of God, I was enabled to calm my perturbed spirit at one time, and think of the blessedness of being entirely consecrated to him. I have resolved to make it my first concern, during the rest of the year, to labor entirely for God the remainder of life. My help to do this is all in God. I trust he will do the work for me; working in me that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. AMEN.

25. When I consider what a portion the everlasting God is to the soul, and how unmindful I have been of the blessedness of such a portion, I do not wonder that my mind is so often harrassed, and my feelings the sport of every passing circumstance. I deserve thus to be buffeted, while I look away from God. This evening I rejoice and bless God for what he is in himself—for his holiness; that he will never suffer any thing polluted to remain in his sight. Oh, that holiness! what a blessing to those who are saved. I think I can bless God that the spirits in heaven will no more be annoyed by the entrance of any thing selfish, even though I am cut off forever. If I am to prove a rebrobate, I am glad that I shall never be permitted to disturb those inhabitants of the heavenly mansions.

31. I desire to humble myself this day, for all the sins of the past year. How aggravated do they appear, when viewed in connection with the mercies I have received! God has granted me the enjoyment of comfortable health; the exercise of my reason; food and clothing; kind friends, and a comfortable home. He has, in addition, made me the joyful mother of a promising child. These are but the commencement of what I might enumerate. But the catalogue of my sins! How shall I begin the recital? Some of the most prominent are, self-indulgence, sloth, selfishness, and pride in a thousand forms; a want of cheerfulness, and a want of love. I think I feel some degree of sorrow, and some desire to serve my Redeemer better than ever before. I this evening enter anew into covenant with him; and Oh! may I do it in sincerity, and in dependence on his grace.

COVENANT.

So far as I know my own heart, I avouch the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be my God; the Father to be my Father; Jesus Christ to be my Mediator, Redeemer and Judge; the Holy Ghost to be my Sanctifier, Guide and Comforter, and the Word and Law of God to be my *rule* of life. To this God I consecrate myself, my child, and all things, in an everlasting covenant.

I acknowledge my indispensable obligation to glorify God in the duties of a sober, righteous and godly life; particularly in the duties of a church state; walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless; sanctifying the holy Sabbath; conscientiously supporting and attending upon the

public worship of God in his sanctuary; observing the sacraments of the New-Testament,—Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and, moreover, I engage conscientiously to observe all the appointments of the church to which God, by his providence and grace, may direct.

I promise watchfully to avoid all sinful contentions and stumbling blocks; to seek for grace; to give and receive christian admonition.

I engage to maintain and favor family worship and secret prayer; to dedicate my child to God, and labor for the spiritual good of all under my care.

All this I do, relying upon the blood of the everlasting covenant for the pardon of my sins, and beseeching the glorious God to prepare and strengthen me for every good work to do his will, working in me that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and dominion forever, Amen. ELIZABETH BUXTON.

Dec. 31, 1839.

Jan. 6, 1840. Some enlargement in meditation and prayer, both morning and evening, for *the conversion of the world.* Oh! how shall I express my thanks for what God has done during the past year! The tongue of an angel would hardly be able to record the extent of the blessing. The Sandwich Islands, many souls converted. Among the English missions in Bombay, 50 villages renounced idolatry. The Jews are many of them brought to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. The sovereigns of heathen lands asking for teachers. Evangelical societies formed for the benefit of nations nominally Christian. Surely the Lord has been here. May he carry forward this blessed work. Oh, let not the hearts of those who labor be suffered to faint, or become proud or careless. Furnish the dear missionaries more and more abundantly with thy *grace;* and may the Holy Spirit accompany and bless all their labors. May Christians at home be animated with the same spirit, the same love of souls. Oh, may the present year be, more than any year preceding, a year of the right hand of the Most High. Lord, I give myself up anew to thee; may I be a missionary in labors, in self-denial, in patience. Give me a portion of that love which purchased redemption for this fallen world.

22. I open the bible this morning, and my eye glanced at the promise contained in Hos. 2: 19, 20: all the parts of which seemed full of comfort, and the whole forming a cluster as it were for the heavenly Canaan, which was refreshing to my soul.

"*And I will betroth thee unto me forever.*" How the love of God is here manifested, in admitting a vile sinner into an endearing relation to himself. The best earthly friend may prove unfaithful; but this love shall exist *forever.* The dearest earthly friend may be called away by death; the most faithful heart cease to beat: but *I*, the everlasting God, will betroth thee unto me *forever.* "*And I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness.*" In all the transaction, there is perfect righteousness. His dealings with me are all righteous. Moreover, he has wrought out a righteousness for me. "*And in judgment.*" Does this mean that he will visit me for my sins? Well; it is but to break my heavy yoke, and introduce me into the glorious liberty of the children of God; "*in loving kindness;*" not merely that kindness which prevents him from doing me evil, but *loving-kindness:* how full the expression, "*and in mercies.*" Yes, mercy runs through all his dealings with me. *I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness.* Oh, the depth of that faithfulness. It is by this that the work is carried on. It is on his faithfulness I rest for the fulfilment of every promise; for final deliverance and triumph; the perfect salvation of my own soul; and on his covenant faithfulness I rest for the salvation, the early conversion of my child. And now, oh my soul, will thou accept these terms? Wilt thou not give thy heart to him who thus asks it? who condescends to offer thee *himself?* Dost thou answer, I am not fit? I can never be lovely in his sight. He knows what will make thee so; and he promises to make thee all that he would have thee to be. Lord, I lift my prayer to thee! My soul longs after thee. Words cannot describe the disparity between thee and my soul. Here, take me, and make me thine in a perpetual covenant..

Feb. 16. I was providentially disappointed in my expectations of worshipping God in his house this day. But I trust it has been a good day. I have had as-

sistance in prayer and meditation. My views directed to the Spirit, as the Teacher, and Guide and Sanctifier of his people. His *love* in striving with the sinful children of men, when their sins make them so abominable in his sight, when they are so ready to grieve him away. His love to the elect, notwithstanding all their departures; his love to the humble and sincere; his tenderness when he reproves the backslider; his readiness to restore to such the joys of salvation; his tenderness towards the tempted, the afflicted, the sick and the dying. Holy Spirit, have I not given myself to thy teachings? Lead me into all truth, and into the paths of holiness.

17. Church prayer meeting. Through the goodness of God, I was favored with more earnestness, in joining in the prayers offered; more freedom from wandering thoughts. I felt more my need of the graces of the Spirit than I recollect to have felt ever before. I desire to thank God, and take courage; and while I despair of doing any thing of myself, to expect great things from God.

19. Oh, what cause do I find for deep humiliation before God. May the remembrance of my former sins bring me to repentance. I think I can cling to that refuge in which I hope, and look to Jesus to give me the Spirit, to reprove and to sanctify.

Sab. eve. 22. I desire to record, with the deepest humiliation and gratitude, the dealings of God with me the past week. It has been a good week to my soul. I have been enabled, as I humbly trust, to cast myself upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and to receive him as my best portion; to renounce my dependence on myself, and to form my resolutions of obedience, relying upon him. I have looked forward to the sorrows of life, and felt that, through Christ strengthening me, I can meet them. Oh! these "fleshly feelings!" how they take away my strength, and my enjoyment. I desire to be set free from them, —not by being placed in no circumstances to call them forth; not by having my own selfish wishes gratified; but by *crucifying self;* by having my will entirely conformed to the will of God. I have found this the desire of my heart. Surely it is the work of the Holy Spirit, if I am not greatly deceived. Jesus, I bow to take thy yoke upon me. I sometimes feel greatly afraid I shall be again left to myself. But Oh!

"Let me be *fastened to thy cross,*
Rather than lose the sight"

I have had of the goodness of God, his service, and his presence. May this goodness lead me to repentance. I desire to mourn over my sinful heart, as the root of all the evils under which I groan. I desire to see the deformity of my sins, all my selfishness, my sensuality, my pride, unkindness to others, murmurings, &c. My Father, wilt thou work in me that repentance which is unto life, and not to be repented of.

Ap. 2, 1841. ——

It is our dear E's. birth day. I awoke in the morning with the apprehension that I was not in a state of heart for the duties of the day. But I remembered that it was wholly of grace that I could hope to labor or pray. This I endeavored to ask for. I think I have some freedom in prayer. Oh, my Father, I give this child to thee. She was born with a sinful nature; may she be renewed. May her soul be washed in the laver of regeneration. May each of the persons of the glorious Trinity be engaged for her salvation.

I desire to be qualified for the discharge of the important duties devolving upon me. In a few weeks, I may receive another precious immortal to bring up for eternity. Oh! if my life is spared, I pray that I may obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I am surrounded by favorable influences. We have endeavored to make our family a school of piety. Our regulations are calculated for this object. I value, above all price, our morning and evening devotions. Through the blessing of God, they are not, and have never been, a hasty, lifeless form. May these considerations lead me to faithfulness in the discharge of my duties. I desire to labor every day under the influence of a good hope, that whatever duties may devolve upon me, my labor will not be in vain.

April 17. In reviewing my life, as the weeks pass away, I detected much worldliness. What reason I have to be thankful that when I give my time for religious duties so sparingly, and sometimes, I fear, grudgingly, that these

seasons of private devotion are so precious and profitable as they sometimes are. I must be more faithful in this respect. I resolve at this time to leave my worldly cares in the fore part of the day, unless providentially prevented,—so to arrange my pursuits as to spend one hour every day, aside from my evening exercises, in secret devotion, and in reading the Scriptures. I cast myself upon the mercy of God, for strength to do this. Without divine grace, I shall fail. May I be under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, that my prayers may be such as can be answered! and may I search the scriptures, seeking for heavenly wisdom. Oh! the depravity that dwells within me! I am greatly in danger of studying the historical and prophetic parts of the Bible, from motives of curiosity, or perhaps vanity. Blessed Spirit! be pleased to lead me into all truth; to take of the things of Christ, and show them unto me.

Jan. 29, 1842. I have been reviewing the progress of my spiritual affections. For a long time I have been concerned to find that my heart seemed less affected in view of the excellency and preciousness of Christ than formerly. I have made it a subject of prayer, that I might see more of the glory of Christ; that the Spirit might take of the things of Christ, and show them to me, &c. I think my soul is resting upon him with more of a sense of my need, and with more sincere desires for his salvation, than when I was more sensible of the exercise of love to him; and that I do as truly rejoice in him, as when I had those transient, lively feelings. During the last week, we have been reading the account of the appointment of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, the directions for the ark, altar, tabernacle, and the garments of the priests. These descriptions seemed full of meaning:—I thought I could discern something of the glory of Christ. I desire to render my thanks in deep humility for this grace. There is another subject upon which my mind is exercised, and which I ought to lay seriously to heart. I have some hope that I have tasted the good word of life:—but my religion does not, as it were, embrace my children. Oh! it must not be so; that precious faith, by which the believing parent enters into covenant with God, is the duty of all to whom are committed the care of children. I desire to seek it; diligently attending to whatever means are within my reach, and watchfully avoiding whatever may grieve the Spirit from me.

Feb. 7. I have set apart this day that I might seek without distraction, to mingle my prayers with those of the people of God, for the outpouring of his Spirit upon the churches in this and other lands. Many hinderances from my little one have wearied me, and my sinful heart is rebellious.

"Oh for a glance of heavenly day,
"To take the stubborn stone away."

What would be my feelings, if God should now pour out his Spirit upon us! Could I enter into the work? Without that same Spirit to quicken me, and to keep down self and sin, I should be as miserable in such a season as the impenitent. Lord, I cast myself upon thee. May I realize thy 'grace to be sufficent for me.' I want faith; I want genuine repentance, and deep humility. This church is in much affliction, but the gentle influences of God's Spirit would melt away our difficulties, as the gentle sun-beams operate upon the snow.

For my help in future, I note down my subjects of prayer:—

Seeking for a blessing in my own soul this day:
Confession of my unfaithfulness as a wife and mother:
The presence of God in all the churches observing this concert:
Confession of my want of simplicity, and singleness of heart:
Thanksgiving for the special meeting of the Board:
Petition for the Sandwich Islands:
Petition for mission ship, bound for Ceylon:
Petition for N. H. ministers, seminaries, schools, &c.:
Petition for young men in course of education, L.F. and G. F.:
Petition for Ipswich acquaintances, teachers:
Petition for our own meeting this evening; br. S.:
Petition for particular churches:

Petition that the present year may be a year of the right hand of the Most High; and that as a result:—

1. The number of christians be greatly increased.

2. That the *piety* of professing christians be increased many fold; and thus the great missionary enterprise be accelerated from year to year.

Thansgiving for this good opportunity; seeking pardon through the blood of Christ, for the sins with which my worship has been contaminated; commendation of myself and ways to God.

Mrs. B. was in the habit of selecting topics for meditation, every day, while engaged in domestic duties. This fact will explain several allusions in her journal. The plan adopted by her, is recommended to all.

Dec. 11. *Morning.* Meditation "I will keep thee in the hour of temptation." Rev. 3: 10.

Evening. Hypocrisy.

12. *Morning.* Sincerity in prayer. Ps. 26:

Evening. The same.

13. *A. M.* Feelings in view of Divine sovereignty.

P. M. Being led by the Spirit.

14. *A. M.* Duty of cherishing high hopes.

P. M. Holiness in a minister's companion.

15. *A. M.* The favor which God shows to those who worship him in the sanctuary.

P. M. Some record of the dealings of God with me.

16. *P. M.* Manner of spending every day, as recommended by Doddridge.

17. *A. M.* Further consideration on regulation of conduct during the day.

P. M. Spiritual Knowledge.

18. *P. M.* Should we converse with others for any length of time, without speaking of God?

20. *A. M.* Election.

21. *P. M.* Grace of *hope* in a minister's companion.

22. *P. M.* Making our calling and election sure.

23. *A. M.* Humility—1st part; understanding.

P. M. 2nd part; affections.

24. *A. M.* Slightness of spirit.

P. M. Beginning of another year.

25. *A. M.* Reflections upon my own temper and feelings.

P. M. Duty of *always* rejoicing in *God.*

26. *A. M.* } Duty of covenanting with God.
P. M. }

27. *P. M.* Sorrow on account of the sins of others.

28. *A. M.* Duty of being active in the service of Christ.

P. M. Families of ministers. This Church.

29. *P. M.* Goodness of God to this Church since its formation.

30. *P. M.* Unrepented sins.

31. *A. M.* Some review of the sins of the closing year, and of God's mercies.

P. M. Renewal of covenant.

Jan. 3. *P. M.* Character of God.

5. *A. M.* Sabbath a blessing wherever the Gospel is preached.

P. M. Fear of displeasing God.

6. *A. M.* } Conversion of the world.
P. M. }

7. *P. M.* Falling in with every Providence.

8. *P. M.* Blessedness of the missionary work, and duty of every christian to be a missionary.

9. *A. M.* Preparation for afflictions.

P. M. Neglect of the soul of my child.

11. *P. M.* The Sabbath a golden privilege.

12. *A. M.* On spending this day so as to become better fitted for the service of God than ever before.

P. M. On faithfulness, this week.

14. *P. M.* On the work of Christ.

22. *A. M. & P. M.* Saints betrothed to Christ.
27. *P. M.* On seeking the spiritual good of every one with whom I meet.
30. *A. M.* "Faint, yet pursuing."
P. M. Separation from the world.
31. *P. M.* The present life but a point.
Feb. 1. *A. M.* Duty respecting a favorite pursuit.
2. *P. M.* Dependance on God in public worship.
P. M. "Search the Scriptures."
3. *A. M.* Monthly Concert. Promises respecting latter day of glory.
P. M. Eye single to the glory of God.
7. *A. M.* "Christ liveth in me."
P. M. Acceptance with God.
8. *A. M.* Attraction of the cross.
P. M. Not under the law, but under grace.

As a help to others who desire to make high attainments in the divine life, I also add Mrs. Buxton's analysis of the PARTS OF PRAYER, and her arrangement of SPIRITUAL GRACES.

PARTS OF PRAYER.

Invocation.
Adoration.
Confession.
Petition.
Pleading.
Profession, or self-dedication.
Thanksgiving.
Blessing.
Amen, or the conclusion.

DIRECTIONS IN PRAYER.

1. Shake off sin, anger, distrust, &c.

HELPS.

1. Right apprehensions of God's dreadfulness, purity, power, &c.
2. A true sense of our vileness, abominableness, nothingness, &c.
3. A hearty survey of the infiniteness and inexpressibleness of God's bounty, blessings and compassionate forbearance towards us.

PREPARATIVES TO PRAYER.

1. Removing impediments.
a. Carnal thoughts and worldly cares.
b. Pollutions and corrupt affecitons.
c. Surfeiting and drunkenness. With ordinary prayer, we must join a moderate diet, with extraordinary fasting.
d. Our sins.
e. From resting in prayer.
2. Means to be used.
a. Prayer and meditation.
b. On our own unworthiness.
c. On the mediation and intercession of Christ.

DUTIES IN PRAYER.

I. Pray in truth.
I. Pray with unfeigned lips.
2. Send away wandering thoughts.
II. By the help of the Spirit.
III. In the name of Christ.

DUTIES AFTER PRAYER.

1. Quietly to rest in the good will and pleasure of God.
2. Diligently to use all good means for the obtaining of our suits.
3. Carefully to look after our prayers, and to cast up our gainings and our comings in by prayer.

SPIRITUAL GRACES.

1. Knowledge.
2. Faith. Ps. 97: 11. Rom. 18: 4.
3. Hope. Ps. 56: 5. Job 13: 15.
4. Joy. Is. 12: 2: 3.
5. Love. Deut. 30: 6.
6. Fear. Jer. 32: 39, 40.
7. Obedience. Ezek. 11: 19, 20.
8. Repentance. Mal. 3: 7.
9. Humility. Gal. 5: 22.
10. Meekness. Zeph. 2: 3.
11. Patience. Heb. 10: 36.
12. Righteousness. Rev. 19: 7, 8.
13. Uprightness.
14. Peace of conscience.
15. Zeal.
16. Perseverance.

SPIRITUAL DUTIES.

1. Prayer.
2. Praise.
3. Preaching.
4. Reading the word.
5. Loving the word.
6. Waiting on the word.
7. Hearkening to the word.
8. Sacraments.
9. A lawful oath.
10. Fasting.
11. Meditation.
12. Self-examination.
13. Sanctification of the Lord's day.
14. Watchfulness.
15. Conference.
16. Reproof.
17. Almsgiving.
18. Seeking of God.
19. Waiting on God.
20. Delighting in God.